

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Chou et al. ("Chou") in view of an article by Bruce Schneier in Applied Cryptography ("Schneier"). For at least the following reasons, Applicants respectfully disagree and traverse these rejections.

a. Claims 1-10 and 20-25

Claims 1-10 and 20-25 are directed at devices and methods, respectively, which include the feature of, among other things, comparing a near end password with a far end password and allowing transmission of confidential information from the near-end to the far-end if the comparison results in a match.

In contrast, as the Office Action admits, there is no comparison of a near end password with a far end password at all in Chou, let alone a comparison which occurs at a near end (the location of a facsimile machine operated by a sender of a facsimile). Nor does the addition of Schneier overcome this deficiency. Though Schneier carries out a comparison, this comparison does not occur at a near end, rather it occurs at a far end. In addition, the comparison which occurs at the far end (referred to as a "host" in Schneier) is a comparison of a far end password to ensure it matches the same password which was previously transmitted to a near end. Said another way, there is no comparison of a near end password with a far end password, as in claims 1-10 and 20-25 of the present invention.

Claims 1-10 and 20-25 require that: (a) there be a comparison of passwords; and (b) that comparison takes place at a near end location where a facsimile is sent. Neither Chou nor Schneier, taken separately or in combination, discloses these features.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully requests withdrawal of the pending rejections and allowance of claims 1-10 and 20-25.

(b) Claims 11-19

Claims 11-19 require a notification unit which is adapted to generate a notification signal upon receipt of a password request signal. Neither Chou nor Schneier, taken separately or in combination, discloses or suggests a notification unit which is adapted to generate a notification signal upon receipt of a password request signal, as in claims 11-19 of the present invention.

Chou does not disclose or suggest any type of password request signal. Instead, the password in Chou is either: (a) sent to a near end or sender (originator) of a facsimile by the recipient (see column 2, lines 32-42) without the use of a request signal; or (b) is obtained by the sender of a facsimile using a phone directory, again, without the use of a request signal.

Nor is there a disclosure or suggestion in Schneier of the use of a password request signal, as in claims 11-19 of the present invention. Rather, Schneier explicitly says that a private key is never sent over a transmission line thereby making it unnecessary to have a password request signal in the first place.

In sum, the inventions embodied in the claims of the present invention would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art upon reading the disclosures of either Chou or Schneier, taken separately or in combination, at the time the present application was filed.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the pending rejections and allowance of claims 11-19.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact John E. Curtin at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

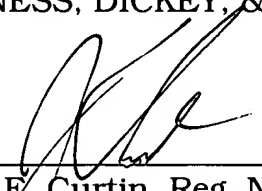
In the event this Response does not place the present application in condition for allowance, applicant requests the Examiner to contact the undersigned at (703) 668-8000 to schedule a personal interview.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

HARNESS, DICKEY, & PIERCE, P.L.C.

By



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